September 18, 1967

Mr. Harry Ashmore
Executive Secretary
Center For The Study Of Democratic Institutions
Santa Barbara, Calif.

Dear Mr. Ashmore,

The headline on the three-column story your joint report with Mr. Bagge and Mr. Quaitinella has in this Mornings Washington Post backets Peace and Duplicity and, with a sigh, reminds me of the lonely fight I've been waging for more than three years, with a rejection when I turned to your center for help without which I will still succeed but still need.

Peace is the crucial issue of the day, I am condident we do not have it only because of worse than duplicity.

But can we either begin there or stop with it? My overriding concern is with the duplicity.

Since the Kennedy assassination I have been averaging a work-day of more than 18 hours, seven days a week, often more than 20 hours, and not infrequently I've worked around the clock. Now I've slowed down to where, like last night, I can sleep six hours. In those words that now will never die, alone and unassisted it is I who opened the subject of the official investigation of the assassination and really made the only exhaustive study of the assassination in terms of that investigation.

Save for those of a few friends, every door closed in my face-yours, too. More than 100 publishers throughout the world rejected my first book, in more than 60% of the cases with raves from their executive editors, who predicted best-seller status. So, although in debt, I went in deep, published it privately, and, with the application of a little intellectual judo, got some attention for it and the subject and, among other things, opened the field and laid the basis of credibility for those who, with publishers and contrary doctrines that facilitated publication, were to follow. With no support or help save that of the hardest-working wife a man

was ever blessed with and an infrequent decent, ordinary American citizen who understands and wants to help, I have continued. Alone of those who have published I havecontinued my work. It is embodied in about a million words now written and a rather large file of documents that present the problem about which I am really writing you, your problem as much as mine.

Last night I finished the rough draft of the text of the fifth completed book in the series. I plan two more, the last a non-organic sequel that, more than any others, relates to the headline on your report. Now you may wonder about the sanity of a man who so relentlessly continues against such total opposition, and if you do, you are in "respectable" company, for others, equipped with no other response, find comfort in the word "paranoid". I suggest that you might understand Frost's formulation, about the miles before sleep, from your own experiences. And my work stands. I think you will find it is a job of investigative reporting like none you have seen. As of today, you will find none of the professional sycophants who assail me who will to my face, alone or in combination without limit, on their lickspittle on my writing, with or without the assistance of the former members of the Commission's staff, who also will not debate me. This is the character of my work, the knowledge of the material I have and my own attitude.

Because my work has continued, you will ultimately learn what today I think it unlikely your will believe, that I have done all the definitive work, brought to light every thing of significance that has been published, and will continue to do exactly this.

It is not that I have latched onto a big story and will not leave it not just stubbornness. Nor is it that I alone have competence lacking in others. Others have and will find less time than I, beginning unemployed, had and found, and my background is more than that of a reporter. Also, I see what others do not, that in addressing the assassination and its official investigation, we face the exposed guts of the democratic society. This to me clear view is what led me to write your center a year and a half or two years ago, then seeking the help of some foundation.

Can a President be murdered and consigned to history with the dubious epitaph of a fake official investigation that is then touted as the given word by the press, without jeopardy to all of our basic institutions, to the institution of the presidency, to any incumbent president? Can our society survive in the form we want if a President can be murdered and the official inquest leaves more questions unanswered than it began with, fails to ask the questions that it must have asked, when these questions are within the capacity of man to ask and answer? These are the questions in my mind as I plod, working on nothing else, doing nothing else, more and more feeling the hot Reichstag flame in my mind. I ask you to ask them of yourself, for then you will perhaps better understand me and, I think, confront the central issue your center should have faced before this.

There has been a total abdication of the intellectuals on this subject, from the beginning, when what happened to Oswald should never have been permitted to happen -when they shared the silence of the lawyers-through the issuance of the Report and to the moment, in the face of the most coordinated and largest campaign ever launched against a few minor people and what they have been doing.

Unlike others, I have been restricting myself almost entirely to the official evidence. For a year and a half I have been ransacking the files, quite properly, and with a certain degree of success.

What is happening in New Orleans comes from my work. The third book I finished was entitled "Oswald In New Orleans: CIA Whitewash". It is the first one contracted by a major publisher. I completed its 180,000 word text in early April, mailed it with $200.00 insurance, and had it, not for the first time, delayed by the Post Office - just long enough for the publisher to be "reached" or otherwise influenced. He broke his contract. Within a short while it was offered to and declined by a number of other major publishers. In the last case, an executive quit because his favorable recommendation was overruled on non-editorial, non-business grounds. In order to get it published commercially -have you any concept of the undertaking of publication and distribution by two people who continue to research and write?- I had to arrange with a very small house for them to do it.

This publisher found his normal distribution denied him, so there is no advance for me, no assurance of royalties. Instead, we share the profit or the loss. What a way to publish!

Parallax Publishing Co. is doing this book in pocketbook size. For that format, it is already a large book. In that format, there is no possibility of reproducing the appendix. In any event, the appendix of documents, mostly accurately described as "once secret", is book length and cannot be done in this format. With the new problems they face, Parallax, understandably, is unwilling to do an expensive book in competition with their cheap one.

This, really, is the cause of this letter. I believe this documentation must be published for it goes to many roots, including those of your experience. It is a unique documentation of the working of government, entirely aside from the factual content relating to the subject. At the moment, my indebtedness is just under $30,000. Within a month, if nothing goes wrong, it will be about $35,000, for I'll soon be publishing the fifth book of this series, and I'll do it on added indebtedness. Fortunately, I think I can. Again, what a way to publish!

What I would like to be able to arrange is not so much a subsidy, for I am confident that, ultimately, my work is of considerable financial value, but some sort of guarantee. I would like to be able to publish this book in its complete form, with the documents available next to the text. Aside from what I believe is the importance of just people having access to this work, I believe it is important that it be available to institutions, like libraries. I also believe that in the end there will be enough sale to pay the cost. My concern is with the beginning. My capacity for debt is not without limit, and I must also be able to repay it. Whatever does or does not happen, whether or not I can get this help, I will publish a very limited edition, by expensive photocopy, but that does little other than make a gesture at protecting my literary rights to it. In practice, this is a fiction, as I have already discovered. It is nonetheless desireable.

So, what I am doing is really asking you a question: Do you see the cancer or merely its lump?

Whether or not I get help, I shall continue. With or without help, I shall succeed in what I have undertaken. The questions are how soon and how much. I think these are important. In essence, I seek help so that I may succeed sooner and when it can do more good.

My work is really on the viability of the democratic society, not just on the assassination and its investigation.

I write you in haste, perhaps undiplomatically. Long ago I learned there is nothing I can do to relieve the inference in the minds of others that there is something paranoid in all of this. Particularly now, when the full dishonesty of the press has had its maximum effect, is this a problem. I can only hope that there will come a time when those with some influence will try and see, try and find the truth, and then do something.

To Mr. Baggs, to whom I am sending a copy of this letter, I add one thing: I own all the primary rights to all of my work. I think they have some syndication value. I have hundreds of unseen documents that are, journalistically, quite exciting. I understand he has made expensive assignments within his own staff on this subject, although I may have the wrong paper in mind. If this is true, I doubt if in a year you will find what I already have. Here, perhaps, there is a mechanism.

The only thing new in the experience you report is that it happened to you. It has been happening for a long time. We must do something about it. I hope you will find it possible to help.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg